

July 1, 2005



Senate Hispanic Briefing Room

<http://frist.senate.gov>

Office of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D.

WEEKLY NEWS

FRIST CALLS FOR REVIEW OF BORDER SAFETY STATISTICS

Requests analysis of Border Safety Initiative, federal border-crossing deaths statistics

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D. (R-TN) today called for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) analysis of the Border Safety Initiative as well as a review of death statistics along America's southern and northern borders.

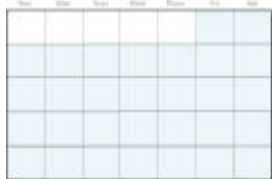
"Last year, several hundred people died in the deserts and mountains that divide the United States and Mexico," said Frist. "Many perished due to exposure to the elements and others died in accidents, however an alarming number were murdered. In 2004 alone, over 20 people died as a result of hanging, blunt-force trauma, gun shot wounds and other apparently deliberate means. We must protect our nation from those who seek to enter it illegally, but we also have a moral obligation to protect all who set foot on our soil from physical harm.

"This GAO assessment can improve the systematic collection of federal data related to border deaths, and ensure that the Border Safety Initiative is being properly implemented and evaluated. It is morally unacceptable to allow these losses of life to go unnoticed or ignored."

In his letter, Senator Frist requests an assessment of the number of annual border-crossing deaths, the level of resources being devoted to the Border Safety Initiative and the government's data collection capabilities in documenting border deaths. Currently it does not appear that there is a systematic collection of federal data related to border deaths. Federal crime statistics collected by the FBI do not regularly publish border homicide statistics, while local level statistics often appear inconsistent with what national data is available.

**United States Senate
The Week Ahead**

4th of July Recess



CAFTA PASSES SENATE 54 - 45

FRIST LAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF CAFTA

Highlights Congress' commitment to pro-growth governance

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D. (R-TN) made the following statement today regarding Senate passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement:

"By raising the level of marketplace competition and lowering barriers to trade, today's agreement benefits economies both at home and abroad. CAFTA empowers American businesses to contend in the global marketplace, and ensures commerce flows fairly and freely between member nations. Increased trade cements ties between countries, and in turn will bolster the budding democracies throughout Central America.

"Furthermore, this legislation ensures that America's small businesses and families are able to buy, sell and shop without being at a competitive disadvantage. The benefits of free trade have been particularly positive for my home state of Tennessee. Over 156,000 employees and 4,000 businesses and countless farmers in my state already benefit from past trade agreements, and this new agreement will continue that trend by ultimately generating over 2,000 new Tennessee jobs.

"This agreement holds great promise for our future, and is another element of the 109th Congress' commitment to governing on the issues that matter most to Americans. In addition to sending the president meaningful class action and bankruptcy reform legislation, the Senate has passed comprehensive energy legislation that will lower energy prices and strengthen our nation's energy security, and a transportation bill that will boost our economy and encourages economic development in America's communities.

"Clearly, we've made tremendous progress so far in the first session of the 109th Congress, and I look forward to continuing to pass legislation on critical issues like CAFTA that will keep America prosperous and competitive in the global marketplace."



We need individuals like you to help us get the message out. Please e-mail me at noe_garcia@frist.senate.gov if you are ready to join the FRIST TEAM.